

BLOOMINGTON ARTS COMMISSION

December 10, 2013

City Hall

Commissioners Attending: Alain Barker, Sally Gaskill, Jan Grant, Abby Henkel, Lynn Schwartzberg, Paul Sturm, Craig Widen

Commissioners Absent: Martina Celerin, Peter Jacobi, Jean Kautt

Staff Attending: Miah Michaelson, Jillian Lea

1. Jan Grant called meeting to order at 5:05. The minutes from the November meeting are not yet available.

2. **Finance Report:** There are no major changes since last month's meeting.

3. **Staff Report:** Miah Michaelson gave the staff report, as follows.

Grants: At the November meeting, the Commission decided to make project grants only once a year, at the April 1 deadline. Miah sent notification of this change prior to Thanksgiving, and the website has been updated.

Public art: The contract for the Transit Center mural has been executed with artist Dale Enochs, and work is proceeding with the architect on specifics of installation. The 4th St Gateway project needs landscaping, which may not be done until early spring. Reza Pishgahi, the artist, will determine if there will be an opening event. Miah is working with the Eastside neighborhood association on a potential sculpture at the corner of Hunter and Mitchell.

Upcoming Meetings: BEAD meets next Monday. The Boys & Girls Club exhibit event opening has been postponed to this Friday night. The new Theatre Consortium, made up of community and university theaters, will meet December 17; Alain Barker is encouraged to attend. Miah has been assisting the group with marketing.

4. **Old Business – South Walnut Street Streetscape:** The artists have proposed to modify the project, and the New Projects Committee has reviewed the plans. The column on the east side would be replaced with a bench in the same style; the column on the west side will remain unchanged. Martina Celerin, a member of the New Projects Committee, voiced concern that people would sleep on the bench but the City is not concerned due to the location of the bench.

Paul Sturm noted his disappointment that the original concept of gateways to downtown, including that already installed on 4th Street, will be lost. Miah said the artists made the proposed modification because of budget issues. Abby said she liked the lopsided design of the bench and tower. Alain is concerned with the size of the pieces. Miah said she thinks the bench will be sizable, and it will be lit. Miah has confidence in the artists' ability to complete the project as modified.

Jan called for a motion to approve the modification as proposed. Lynn Schwartzberg moved for approval, Craig Widen seconded. All voted in favor.

5. **New Business - Arts Commission Appointments.** There is a vacancy due to the resignation of Mary Norman who has moved out of state. Miah asked the Commissioners to think about potential applicants;

it is a mayoral appointment, and suggestions are welcome; we need diversity. Craig is worried about people not having time to commit to the meetings. Miah noted that the BAC has less member turnover and fewer attendance issues than most other commissions.

6. New Business - Envisioning Grants Program Changes. Because we will award Project Grants only once in 2014, potentially we will have half the annual allocated funds (\$10,000) available for other grants. Miah distributed a handout of four potential new grants programs, including ArtZone, Pop-Up, ArtSpark, Arts Power Learning Grants, as well as a revision of our current Project Grants program.

Jan and Alain reviewed the decision-making process at the November meeting, in which the Commission decided to limit Project Grants to one annual deadline. The discussion closely followed our meeting with Mayor Mark Kruzan, in which the Mayor articulated destination-building, neighborhood engagement, and interactive programs as among his priorities for the Arts Commission. Another consideration was the need to spend less of our time on grantmaking so that we have time for other initiatives.

Discussion themes:

- Commissioners like the pro-active nature of the new grantmaking programs.
- Adding new programs with public deadlines would mean spending more rather than less of our time on grantmaking.
- We need to consider our Strategic Plan and identify grantmaking strategies accordingly.
- Rather than adopting new programs with open deadlines, we could respond to letters of intent that meet immediate needs and address specific Commission priorities.
- While we are pleased that the grants fund has grown to its current level over the last few years, \$20,000 may not be enough to make an impact, especially with multiple priorities.
- We could seek both public and private sector partners to increase our impact.
- We could respond to the Mayor's ideas by approaching him with a proposal for increased funding.
- We must be realistic about what we as volunteers can accomplish.
- The proposed ArtZone program – in which funds are allocated to projects in a defined geographic area - is essentially already a reality through the Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association (BUEA), which gave \$16,000 to arts infrastructure projects in 2013. The BAC could be more active in developing this partnership with a more strategic linkage. We are fortunate to have Jean Kautt serving on both the BAC and BUEA.

We will continue the discussion in January.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30pm.

